

FACT SHEET

USAF Lights-Out Operations in Alaskan Military Operations Areas (MOA)

August 2004

The USAF petitioned the FAA for and was granted an exemption to FAR Part 91.209(a)(1) and (b) to conduct operations in specific MOAs without position or anti-collision lights on between sunset and sunrise.

This exemption allows USAF aircraft to obtain realistic Night Vision Goggle (NVG) training at medium to low altitudes in a realistic environment prior to application of those skills in a combat environment. Aircraft position and anti-collision lights are not compatible with safe NVG use.

To assure the safety of non-participating aircraft, the USAF will conduct the following as an equivalent level of safety:

1. Operations under this exemption will be conducted within published MOAs in accordance with times of use criteria. In Alaska, this means MOAs will not be used for lights-out operations beyond 2200L.
2. A Letter of Agreement will outline all lights-out procedures between the Alaskan flying units, Anchorage Center, and regional radar control facilities.
3. 11th Air Force will provide public meetings explaining the requirement for and procedures of lights-out operations. These meetings will be published in local newspapers and on aviation related local web sites.
4. Appropriate NOTAMS will be published at least 24 hours prior to commencement of lights-out operations with Flight Service Stations and on the military NOTAM computer system (available at <https://www.notams.jcs.mil>). Aircrew must specifically FSS attendants ask if lights-out operations are being conducted in specific MOAs when receiving a pre-flight briefing.
5. Aircraft with on-board radar will use their radar to look for and assure the airspace is clear of non-participating aircraft prior to commencing lights-out operations. A continuous radar and radio monitor will be maintained for the entire MOA where lights-out operations are taking place to assure the safety of nonparticipating aircraft.

Alaskan USAF flying units will begin night lights-out operations in October and run through April of each year, in line with usable periods of darkness. Beyond the allowable published usable MOA hours, there are, however, no restrictions on the USAF's time period to conduct scheduled and published lights-out operations in MOAs as operational readiness requirements dictate.

Additional information can be obtained from the 11th Air Force Airspace office at (907) 552-5265/0999.